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TAG FLAG

Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament

Next year, maybe a fishing tournament centered around a beach party!!



Rod Van Saun congratulates Brian Hill with an authentic moose rack from Alaska for doing an outstanding job.

The 18th annual TAA Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament was again hosted at the beautiful Hotel Dorado Pacifico in Ixtapa, Mexico, February 2-9, 2008.

The excitement was building as 34 anglers and 26 guests from the United States and Costa Rica gathered at the Dorado Pacifico to begin our week long event that included four days of angling competition.

The opening night banquet showed off the wonderful prize table assembled by Co-Chairman, Captain Rod Van Saun of Ninilchik, Alaska. With the help of our many fine sponsors the prize table included products from Costa Del Mar, Shimano, G.Loomis, Iland Lures, Ande Line Company and Hook & Tackle. Our top four anglers this year received trophy's generously provided by Gray Taxidermy of Miami.

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Next Up Eastcape Billfish Tournament

June 5-9, 2008

Jim Severson is heading up the efforts for the 26th annual Eastcape Billfish Tournament.

It is located at Hotel Palmas de Cortez. This is the gem of Baja's East Cape, spanning the beachfront of the town of Los Barriles. Situated along a beautiful white sand beach, this first-class resort offers full amenities for anglers and families alike.

Applications are out and if by chance you have misplaced yours, email Jim Severson.



It comes as no surprise that our first angler profile would be about the king himself. I was lucky enough to fish with Smokey in Ixtapa this year. It was one of the most enjoyable and relaxing fishing days I've ever had. Even in a day when you would have paid just to see a billfish,



Smokey's attention to detail and his anticipation of what might come by was astounding. When a billfish came through like a freight train, Smokey was up and had his rod out of it's holder before I could even think about putting my corn nuts down. Most of us have had the pleasure of spending time with Smokey over the years and we are all better off for it.



Smokey Molle with his latest student, Adrienne Holland

I have first hand knowledge that Smokey took the greenest of anglers this year and turned her into a real billfish aficionado. Now I have to live with her endless questions that I can't answer. All I can say is call Smokey and let me know what he says.

The history behind the Molle dynasty at the Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament goes a bit past Smokey.

See Smokey page 3

RELEASE MILESTONES



Judy Franich takes a rest after landing her 100th billfish release. Congratulations on outstanding sportsmanship and representing the TAA. We all have fished with Judy over the years and enjoyed every minute of it.

Judy is congratulated by Kate Van Saun in Ixtapa. →





MUCHO GRASIAS



The Hill Huddle relaxing on the beach in Ixtapa after putting on a spectacular tournament

IST

Recent fishing reports showed very good action for sailfish and marlin in the weeks leading up to our event. Favorable sea conditions greeted our anglers as they headed out of Zihuatanejo Bay early Monday morning.

The fishing started slowly on the first day with 1 marlin, 5 sailfish and 3 dorado tipped by our anglers. Our Day 1 leader was Brian Hill with 250 points. The first fish of the tournament was tipped by Steve Davis.

Day 2 was a slight improvement with 8 Sailfish and 1 Dorado.

Each day anglers reported seeing lots of sailfish, a tremendous number of porpoise and lots of bait, but for whatever reason the fish were not on the bite.

Day 3 continued our improving trend with 13 sailfish and 8 dorado.

See IST page 5

Smokey from page 2

Although Smokey himself has dominated this tournament either as the champion (1994, 1998, 2001) or in the top four several times, some of his most ominous competition comes from within his own family.

Alene Molle is no slacker when it comes to landing the prize. As most of us have had the opportunity to fish with Alene, you soon realize that this angler is as serious about fishing as it gets. As Smokey mentioned to me while fishing this year, you don't come in from a days fishing with Alene until you have a fish. "She flat wore me out, say's Smokey". Alene has been the champion in 1995 and 1996. She has also won the International Sailfish Tournament in Costa Rica in 1996. Looking back though the record books, you will find that Alene has been knocking on the door to the championship in Ixtapa several times.

If it wasn't enough that Smokey and Alene have had a presence in Ixtapa, they decided to bring on down their son, Allen. Allen has to be a fantastic poker player. He is clearly one of the most unassuming individuals you will ever meet. Put that kid in a boat, and get ready for the show. Allen has fished the IST to championships in 2002 and 2007. Several other times he was challenging the podium.

The Tournament Anglers Association is proud to be associated with a family of anglers like the Molles. I can't imagine what it must be like fishing with all three of them on the same boat in Florida. I envision a bunch of fish waving little white flags all around them. "I give up". I'll have to dream up a comic strip on that one.

This situation will only compound itself as the next generation of Molles prepare to take on our tournaments. As we come up with a solution, it might be to our advantage to just fish with them as much as possible to learn the secrets.



President Jim Gill

While the fishing was somewhat short of Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament expectations the camaraderie and conversation exceeded previous standards. It was during one the spectacular sunset worship sessions that I was reminded by a recent TAA inductee of the association's mission to foster sportsmanship and the conservation of the sport fishery and billfish population. Standard protocol for events dedicated to fishermen saga and customary refreshment is to include all persons of wisdom and opinion in the conversation. In very little time the discussion group expanded and expression expounded. Apropos, the discussion focused on the diminished release statistics and a concern that the Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament may slip into the sunset. A similar fate suffered by the Tournament of Champions a decade earlier. The discussion produced two very different options. First suggestion was to explore a new tournament location with quality fishing that offers the Ixtapa

From the Board

experience with similar amenities and attraction. A direction considered by previous boards that has not produced a comparable contender. The second option was to stand by our mission and actively pursue avenues that support conservation and help our friends in Zihuatanejo and Ixtapa recapture the fishery that produced the exceptional release statistics of past tournaments. To that objective this past spring TAA board members prepared a letter expressing TAA's concern for the future of the area's sport fishing and related tourism industry. It was included in a presentation to Mexican government officials that has resulted in efforts to curtail illegal commercial fishing in the area. According to some of the veteran fishing boat captains the sailfish count has improved with respectable release numbers during the month of January.

TAA's effort to extol the benefits of release tournaments and encourage the release of all billfish caught has become standard practice for several of the local captains. The introduction of circle hooks has had an impact and with continued encouragement will garner results. The next challenge is to step up the pressure on government officials to contain illegal commercial fishing. It is the intent of TAA to explore appropriate avenues in pursuit of our mission.

YOU MAKE THE CALL

What part of the following paragraph is false?

Angler Positions Each angler will fish two rods. The rods can be fished from opposite sides of the boat. Anglers will rotate sides of the boat every hour or as mutually agreed. No use of down riggers is allowed, as they are not available on all boats.

Answer on next page



Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament Results

Daily First Fish	Time		
Monday	9:03	Steve Davis	
Tuesday	7:59	Bob Fox	
Thursday	8:16	Brian Hill	
Friday	10:18	Bill Evans	
Daily Last	Time		
Monday	1:44	Tricia Bothmer	
Tuesday	2:29	Judy Franich	
Thursday	12:15	Mike Leech	
Friday	11:45	Mike Leech	
Daily High Point	Points		
Monday	250	Brian Hill	
Tuesday	310	Judy Franich	
Thursday	300	Brian Hill	
Friday	160	Bill Evans	
4th Place Team	Points		
#13	460	Bill Evans Tricia Bothmer	
3rd Place Team	Points		
#15	470	Neal McNamara Rocky Franich	
2nd Place Team	Points		
#6	482	Mike Leech Richard Allen	
1st Place Team	Points		
#12	710	Danny Brooks Brian Hill	
ROLEX QUALIFIERS	Points		
4TH	310	Judy Franich*	
3RD	320	Dale Miles	
2ND	450	Mike Leech	
GRAND CHAMPION	550	Brian Hill	
*earlier fish			
Alternate	310	Smokey Molle	
Fish Totals	Sail	Marlin	Dorado
	29	1	16



IST from page 3

F i n a l R e s u l t s

The positive thing about the low fish count was that the tournament was anyone's to win going into the fourth day. A few fish could put an angler and their team into the running, and a big day could put you right on top.

Day 4...that elusive "Hot Bite" did not materialize and our final day ended with our lowest fish count of the week with 3 Sailfish and 4 Dorado. The last fish of the event was tipped by Mike Leech.

The Captain's award party was held at the El Mirador restaurant at the pier in Zihuatanejo. Lamiglas rods were awarded to each daily high point Captain. The rods went to Leonardo on Fish On, Jaime on the Albatros received two, and Alex on Esturion. Jaime was also awarded a pair of Costa Del Mar sunglasses for being the top Captain of the tournament.

Judy Franich was recognized at the angler's award banquet by Steve Davis for her 100th tournament billfish release.

The 2008 TAA Ixtapa Sailfish Tournament team for the IGFA Offshore World Championship held in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico will be Brian Hill, Mike Leech, Dale Miles and Judy Franich.

YOU MAKE THE CALL

Rods in the IST must be fished from the same side of the boat as the angler resides.



Let's go fishing



Membership in TAA is open to all persons who subscribe to good sportsmanship, fair play and angling by the rules, as established by The International Game Fish Association ("IGFA"). TAA is a club member of IGFA and anglers must be members of IGFA in order to fish in TAA sanctioned tournaments.

**IGFA Partners with
Bonnier Marine Group to
Produce Offshore World
Championship**

**For complete article go
to:**

**[http://www.igfa.org/
bonnier_igfa.asp](http://www.igfa.org/bonnier_igfa.asp)**

Calendar

Now

**Get your application
in for Eastcape**

**June 5-9 Eastcape Billfish
Tournament**

**July 1-Applications come out
for Ixtapa Sailfish
Tournament**

**September 1 - Application
deadline for Ixtapa
Sailfish Tournament**

**Jan 2009 Ixtapa Sailfish
Tournament**



Tournament Angler's Association

62 Ranch Road
San Rafael, CA 94903

Addressee Name

4321 First Street

Anytown, State 54321